

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A telephone answering device, comprising:
a telephone line interface;
a controller;
voice message memory adapted to store a plurality of voice messages; and

a secured message authorization module adapted to allow a party calling said telephone answering device to leave a voice message together with a user's authorization code corresponding to only one of a plurality of users of the telephone answering device, to separately secure said voice message in a single mailbox ~~said voice message~~ for access only by ~~a user~~ said one of said plurality of users ~~authorized to play back said voice message~~.

2. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, further comprising:

a playback/recorder module adapted to record said voice message.

3. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, further comprising:

an authorized security code table including information relating to an ability of said calling party to separately secure said voice message.

4. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 3, wherein:

said authorized security code table further includes at least one security code allowing at least one user access to said separately secured voice message.

5. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 3, wherein:

said authorized security code table is adapted to include call related information relating to at least one calling party authorized to secure a voice message.

6. (currently amended) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, wherein:

said secured message authorization module is adapted to allow said calling party to secure a voice message upon entry by said calling party of an authorized security code corresponding to a given one of said plurality of users ~~by said calling party~~.

7. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, wherein:

said secured message authorization module is adapted to allow said calling party to secure a voice message upon matching of call related information relating to said calling party to at least one pre-stored entry of call related information regarding an ability to secure a voice message.

8. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, wherein:

each of said plurality of voice messages stored in said voice message memory includes header information, said header information including a secure status of said voice message.

9. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, further comprising:

a call related information detector/receiver adapted to detect and receive call related information regarding said calling party.

10. (previously presented) The telephone answering device according to claim 1, wherein:

said controller is adapted to compare call related information received regarding said calling party with at least one pre-stored authorized security code to allow said calling party to separately secure said voice message.

11. (currently amended) A method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

prompting a party calling said telephone answering device to leave a voice message to enter an authorized security code corresponding to only one of a plurality of users authorized to play back said voice message;

comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security code corresponding to said plurality of users and accessible by said telephone answering device; and

upon matching said entered authorized security code with ~~said at least one~~ of said at least one pre-stored authorized security code, securing in a single mailbox ~~a recorded~~ the voice message for access by only said one of said plurality of users ~~by a user~~ authorized to play back said voice message.

12. (previously presented) The method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 11, wherein:

said securing is performed after said voice message is recorded.

13. (previously presented) The method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 11, wherein:

said securing is performed while said voice message is being recorded.

14. (previously presented) The method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 11, wherein:

said securing is performed before said voice message is recorded.

15. (previously presented) The method for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 11, further comprising:

entering said authorized security code from a telephone being used by said calling party.

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) Apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device, comprising:

means for prompting a party calling said telephone answering device to enter an authorized security code corresponding to only one of a plurality of users authorized to play back said voice message;

means for comparing an entered authorized security code to at least one pre-stored authorized security codes corresponding to said plurality of users and ~~associated with said voice messages by a calling party while leaving a message;~~ and

means for securing in a single mailbox a recorded voice message for access by said only one of said plurality of users ~~by a user~~ authorized to play back said voice message, upon matching said entered authorized security code with ~~said at least one of said~~ at least one pre-stored authorized security codes pre-stored authorized security code.

19. (previously presented) The apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 18, wherein:

said means for securing secures said voice message after said voice message is recorded.

20. (previously presented) The apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 18, wherein:

said means for securing secures said voice message while said voice message is being recorded.

21. (previously presented) The apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 18, wherein:

said means for securing secures said voice message before said voice message is recorded.

22. (previously presented) The apparatus for securing a voice message in a single mailbox of a telephone answering device according to claim 18, further comprising:

means for entering said authorized security code from a telephone being used by said calling party.

23. (canceled)

24. (canceled)